

Samoa's health minister leads the way

Contributed by Jasmine Netzler-Iose, Samoa Observer
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Apia, Samoa, 20 November 2010—Minister of Health, Gatoloaifaana A. Gidlow walked the talk at the forefront of exercises to commemorate the National Healthy Lifestyle Week at Malifa. The Minister was among hundreds of public servants who had been granted half a day off to get healthy. (Story continues at 'Read more' below).

Minister Gatoloa'i pictured exercising before a Pacific ministerial meeting in Madang, PNG in 2009.

Health message needs to be understood—Mata'afa Keni Lesa Samoa Observer.
http://www.samoaoobserver.ws/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=29631:health-message-&catid=51:editorial&Itemid=103

Bobby Fruean, Su'a Hesed Ieremia, Sydney Faasau holding baby Taimane and Kelly Manuleleua.

'Daily exercise and a healthy diet will keep the body and mind fit,' Gatoloa'i said.

This was the first gathering of its kind although the programme for government ministries and corporations to promote

healthy living is three years old.

In previous years, individual ministries were allowed the freedom to choose their own celebration of the day.

“This year is the first time that we have come together to promote keeping healthy,” Gatoloai said.

The opportunity also allowed public servants to get to know each other in an informal and friendly environment.

Bobby Fruean, Susana Hesed Ieremia, Sydney Faasau holding baby Taimane and Kelly Manuleleua.

“We hope this will be an annual event that will also extend to all other ministries and corporations,” she said.

“I feel that in our culture it’s the women who bring things together and who follow up on objectives put in place especially in the villages. And that is what we have applied to this day and event.”

The goal of the National Healthy Lifestyle Week was to raise awareness about the negative health impacts of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes, hypertension, heart diseases, cancer, and conditions such as obesity.

National Healthy Lifestyle Week also promoted good health and well being through education and promotion activities.

It drew attention to the risk factors—such as obesity, poor nutrition, alcohol, smoking and lack of physical activity—the causes, symptoms and complications associated with unhealthy lifestyles, and the urgent need to adopt healthy lifestyles in order to reduce these diseases.